Or n Juce

Atari Computer Association of Orange County

Volume 9, Number 1 First Quarter, 1988

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ACAOC OrnJuce

Volume 9, Number 1
First Quarter, 1988

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This month's cover art, "JAZZ!," is a product of Beyond Graphics.

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All articles are available on Atari 400/800/1200/XL/XE 5.25" and Atari ST 3.5" format disks to other publications sending a blank disk and a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

The deadline for OrnJuce article submissions is no later than the 20th of the month for publication in the next issue.

Commercial Advertising is available in the ACAOC OrnJuce at the following monthly rates. For those advertizing 3 or more consecutive months, there is a 20% discount. AD COPY MUST BE SUBMITTED TO THE EDITOR NO LATER THAN THE 24TH OF THE MONTH PRECEDING THE DESIRED ISSUE. The ACAOC will create ad copy for an additional 10% surcharge.

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ACAOC Club News

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Memberships which expired within the last five months have received a complimentary copy of this months newsletter. A word to those people. Please renew your membership before we send the newsletter to the printer in mid-March to continue receiving the OrnJuce.

January Membership Expirations
William Bryan, Jr., Gerry Church, Herbert Huey, Rick Meredith.

February Membership Expirations
Robert & Peter Bane, Hal & Lillian Barton, Brian Bottoroff, David Braud, Carlos Brens, Kha Bui, Dennis Chandler, Karl Frank Collyer, Andy Corcoran, Bruce Findlay, John Gritz, Jr., Steve Holiman, Richard Hull, Norman Isaacson, Alice & Sye Keene, Jon Watkins, Sam Weiman.

March Membership Expirations
Greg Beauton, Tony Bechtel, Ron David, Fred Mathews, Tom Rice, Ed Sacks, Betty Shanahan, Craig Wilson, Alan Worrell.

Welcome New Members
Roy and Jeff Colson (father and son), Mark Burnham, Vi Bui, Micheal Murikami, Alan Isley, Bob Portman, Anthony Foo, Jeff Bulrice, Ron Collins, Ted Reed, Tom Patterson.

Minutes of the January Meeting
by John Barreras, Jr.

The following is what transpired at the January meeting of the ACAOC.

RANDOM ACCESS

Topics discussed:

FCC's plans for extorting money from on-line services put on hold.

The club is trying to acquire new on-line games for the BBS.

Whether or not to open the BBS up to non-members was discussed. No final decision was made so it remains closed until further notice.

DEMONSTRATIONS

Jason Rimmer gave a demo of the graphic role playing game Defender of the Crown.

Gauntlet for the 8 bit was demonstrated.

Tom Mynar displayed the fruits of his labor by showing hard disks and 5 1/4 inch drives that he installed himself.

An XF551 was shown at the meeting and is being tested for a future review.

BUSINESS MEETING

Topics discussed:

The cost of buying a 24 pin printer versus the per page costs of using a laser printer for the newsletter.

The viability of opening the BBS to non-members. The BBS is still closed to visitors.

Plans for this year's Atarifest.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

The C programming sig met for the second time on the 23rd of December at Bill Bentley's house. We spent two hours compiling and recompiling "Hello, World" programs, comparing the compilation speed and final program size of Mark Williams C and the C compiler from the Atari developer's package. The developmental compiler ran a little faster on a floppy disk system, but Mark Williams created the smaller file.

As an aside, it's amazing how many

mistakes four people can make on such a simple program as "Hello, World." Some hotshot C programmers we are. . .

The next meeting of the C sig will be held at the Bentley's house again, this time on Wednesday, 23 March 1988.

FOR SALE

Paul Wu has a Yamaha DX-100 midi synthesizer for sale. Great sounds! Only $250. Leave him a message on the club BBS.

Sharon Brown is looking for a Telelink II cartridge. Leave her a message on the club BBS or call her at (714) 639-7079.

Garry Jones has a copy of the Regent Word II word processing program. He is asking $40 and will consider trades. Leave a message on the club BBS or phone him at (213) 437-2495 between 4pm and 8pm.

John Graser has both the Hippo sound and video digitizers that he would like to sell. He wants $50 for the video digitizer and $75 for the sound digitizer. Best offers will be considered. He is also willing to trade both for a ST-Replay sound digitizer. He also has Space Station for the ST and will trade for any other ST game. You can leave a message on the club BBS or call him at (714) 848-2747.

Dan Hite is selling the following ST games. They are all complete and in the box. They all will run on either monochrome or color monitors:

- Ultima III ($20)
- Phantasie ($20)
- Planet Fall ($15)
- Leather Goddesses of Phobos ($20)
- Beyond Zork ($25)

If interested please leave him a reply on the club BBS or call him at 441-2299.

Gerry Church has the following items for sale:

$100 - Atari 130XE.
$150 - 1050 Disk Drive with Happy upgrade AND Happy Controller.
$ 35 - Atari Touch Tablet with Atari Paint cartridge.
$ 25 - MAC/65 cartridge with manual.
$ 30 - A/B Serial switchbox with 'box to modem' cable.
$ 30 - A/B Parallel switchbox with 'box to printer' cable.
$ 20 - Synfile+ with Synfile+ Utilities disk and manual.
$ 20 - WICO Tracball controller.
$ 15 - Flight Simulator II.
$ 10 - WICO 'Ball Top' Joystick with button on base and top of ball.
$ 10 - MasterType cartridge.
$ 10 - Seastalker (in original packaging).
$ 5 - Chop Suey disk.
$ 5 - Atari Roots book.

He can be contacted via the club BBS or by voice phone at (714) 964-6582.

OK gang, I have a friend in Monrovia who has a friend... know what I mean? Anyway, he has access to GEMCO's left over Atari 8 bit stock, going prices for a 800XL new in the box is $50, 130XE with the KEYBOARD fix is $100, also available are 1027 Printers, 1010 Cassette drives, and floppies. I am not sure if there are disk drives available.

Please call Chris Roberts (818) 359-1697. Chris is the President of PALACE, another Atari Users Group in the Pasadena area. He is looking forward to selling you some stuff, so give him a call!!

Bob Brodie

8-BIT LIBRARY REPORT

New 8-bit Library Policies

by Sharon Brown

As the 8-bit library gradually takes shape with standard disk sides set up and cataloged, the need for making up disk sides piecemeal and/or downloading Genie programs decreases. In addition, such services are time consuming and (in the case of Genie downloads) costly to the club. Therefore, the following price and policy changes will go into effect as of February 14 (the regular February meeting).

1. Standard cataloged disk sides will remain at the $3.00/double sided disk price. Any 2 disk sides may be placed back to back. Every effort will be made to produce and catalog these disk sides quickly, so that most of our available material will become available in this form over the next few months.

2. Custom disk sides put together from library programs not yet available on standard disks will cost $4.00/double sided disk. This includes much of the material on the Genie listing which has been recently downloaded for club members. These programs will eventually appear on standard $3.00 disk sides, so if you are not in a great hurry for a particular program, you might wait and save yourself a buck. A nonrefundable deposit of $4.00 will be required for all custom disk orders, with the balance, if any, due upon receipt of the disks. As always, I will pack the disks as efficiently as I can.

3. Custom downloads from Genie will continue to be available on a limited basis. However, the price of such downloads will be increased to $5.00/disk. A $5.00 deposit will be required on all such orders. The library will continue to add high quality material of general interest from Genie and other download services. Please make suggestions on what you would like to see downloaded for the library. I am looking for cost effectiveness here. If a number of people are interested in a program, it is worth the cost to download it and make it available at regular disk prices. If only one person is interested, he/she should bear the cost for the specialized service.

4. Disks of the Month will continue to be available at $4.00 per disk on the day of each regular meeting. In addition, the Library will now be offering Disk of the Month Subscriptions. An advance payment of $35 will entitle you to a full year's worth of Disks of the Month. This is a saving of $13 over the regular Disk of the Month price, and guarantees that you will get them all, even if you have to miss a couple of meetings. For members who are unable to attend the monthly meetings, a mail order subscription is available for $43, including postage and handling. Mail order subscription disks will be mailed out 3 at a time on a quarterly basis to reduce mailing costs.

5. Hardcopy listings of the Library's standard disk sides are now available for members to purchase for 25 cents. Periodic updates of newly cataloged disk sides will be made available at 10 cents each.

ST LIBRARY REPORT

By Garry Jones

First of all, I would like to thank all those who purchased public domain software from the ST Library at the December meeting. Thanks to your interest and purchases, you made December the most successful month ever for public domain software sales. If you have any comments about the software you've purchased, either positive or negative (particularly if you find a buggy program), please let me know. The feedback really does help me improve the library.

Learn by doing? or, Never shoot yourself in the same foot twice.

I also have an apology to make concerning last month's newsletter. Since we've lost the fine services of Mike Fulton as our newsletter editor, I volunteered to lay out the December edition with Publishing Partner (which I had never used before). As a result, there were a myriad of errors and examples of sloppy typography, the most serious of which was the missing last line of Bill Bentley's article, "Compatibilizing Your Epson Printer." To make up for that mistake, the article is being reprinted in this issue of the OrnJuce. Better results are anticipated in the future.

Disk of the Month

As I've done for the last few months, I made two selections available for disk of the month in December. The first disk was a selection of pictures created with the new Antic program, Spectrum 512. This program is capable of astonishing results in creating color pictures, not only in supporting a full 512 color display, but in its use of dithering patterns which give very smooth tones to images. The best of the Spectrum pictures are equal to anything the Amiga can produce, plus, Spectrum is capable of converting Amiga pictures to its own display mode.

The second choice for disk of the month was a Christmas music and slide show from Audio Light.

In January, the disk of the month was a collection of new Music Studio song files, along with three versions of the Audiolite player program. The first version of the program plays the song files on disk while showing a single NeoChrome picture, allowing more song files to be placed on disk. The second version shows Degas pictures while playing the song files, and the third version shows a high resolution Degas picture while playing the songs. This third version makes it possible for monochrome monitor users to enjoy Music Studio song files, something that wasn't possible before.

For February, there were again two choices for disk of the month,both oriented toward the desktop publisher. Disk number one contained a selection of Publishing Partner fonts: Artistic, Blockup, Columbia, Greek, Helvetica, Hudson, Keyboard, Saturn and University Roman, plus a new version of the Postscript printer driver for Publishing Partner. Disk number two contained Brad Christie's GEM font editor, a font editor to create fonts for downloading to Epson printers, and four GEM fonts: Bauhaus, Calligraphy, Koloss and RBSS72, a 72 point Macintosh display font converted to GEM format with Mike Fulton's FONTZ! program.

It is now possible to purchase the disk of the month on a yearly subscription basis. Purchased separately at $4.00 per disk, twelve disks would cost $48.00, but a subscription will give the purchaser all twelve disks of the month for only $35.00. For the regular disk of the month purchaser, this is a savings of $13.00 dollars for the year. The first disk to be available under this program will be a collection of Music Studio song files, all of them new to our library.

Coming Soon (Stop me if you've heard this one before . . .)

Currently, I've logged eighteen disks of Spectrum pictures into the ST Library catalog and I have several disks full of new Spectrum pictures that were given to me by Brandon Murikami. Look for these disks when the next version of the catalog is ready (hopefully by the time of the next meeting.)

New in the library is the IFF to Spectrum conversion program by Steve Belczyk. This program does a wonderful job of converting Amiga IFF pictures (including hold-and-modify pictures) to Spectrum format.

For hard disk users, the library has the official autoboot programs from Atari and Supra. With these utilities, it's no longer necessary to boot from drive A: before accessing the hard disk.

Also, there are the dlll and reorg programs from Simon Poole. Dlll is a disk and file editor which will work on any disk format, including hard disks. It can automatically check for errors on the disk, recover files (I've used this program to recover accidentally deleted files on hard disks, and once used it to recover all 32 files on a floppy disk with a completely trashed directory. It really works!), and edit any part of the disk, including the boot sector. Reorg will rewrite fragmented files on either floppy or hard disk into contiguous streams, thereby speeding up disk access.

And if you're looking for a great disk formatting program, there's DCFORMAT from Double Click Software, available in both color and monochrome versions. This program allows you to choose from among several format options: single or double sided, 80 or 82 tracks, nine or ten sectors per track, and normal or fast format. In addition, DCFORMAT will copy any format disk (as long as it's not copy protected) and write instructions to the boot sector to turn off write verify, set the system to medium resolution on boot, read a battery backed clock-calender and set the time and date, lock out the hard disk and load a program called COMMAND.PRG on boot. All of these options are user selectable, plus the program works fast.

To close, I'd like to again remind you of the availability of Dbasic. One of our club members, Bob Wada, has been using Dbasic for some time and says it's great. Bill Wilkinson of OSS also endorsed it at the recent Atarifest. According to Mr. Wilkinson, Dbasic is very fast, has a well-written manual, and is relatively bug free. If you don't mind not having access to the ST's GEM features or using a language which essentially turns the ST into a dedicated Basic machine, Dbasic may be worth a try. It's reputed to be easier to learn and use than ST Basic, and for only $5.00 ($20.00 with manual), Dbasic is a bargain.

LATEST NEWS IN THE WORLD OF ATARI

11 December, 1987: ATARI MANUFACTURING UPDATE

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NEW ATARI PLANT

In an attempt to boost personal computer sales in the United States, Atari Corp. plans to open a 100-person small manufacturing plant somewhere in Silicon Valley early in 1988 and a larger factory in either Texas or Nevada later in the year, according to Atari President Sam Tramiel.

Tramiel said that domestic sales were strongly affected by the heavy European demands for the ST line of computers, manufactured exclusively in Taiwan -- about 80% of STs manufactured this year were sold in Europe. "We never had any product left over to bring to the U.S.," he said.

In late 1987 Atari's IBM PC-compatible went on sale in Europe, but Tramiel says that the Atari PC same won't reach stores in the United States until well into next year.

27 January, 1988: ST-TALK PROFESSIONAL

(c)1987, QMI
by John DeMar

The commercial release version of ST-Talk Pro will be ready at the beginning of February 1988. This demo should be very useful in studying the functionality of ST-Talk Pro while making your decision on which modem software to buy. It's taken a great deal of work to get this product to the market and we're trying our best to give you the best product at the lowest price possible. Please make an effort to limit the stealing (piracy) of the release version of this and all programs.

Here's the official policy on pricing and updates...

- The suggested retail price of ST-Talk Pro will be $29.95 US dollars.
- The update fee along with an original ST-Talk 1.0 or 1.1 disk is $10.00.
- Until April 1, 1988 (no kidding), get $10 off the retail price if you send in an original disk of any other commercially available Atari ST modem program. This is a final price of $19.95 plus shipping. Orders must be direct from QMI for this offer.
- In all cases, you will receive the full package & manual, not just a disk.
- After purchasing ST-Talk Pro:
  1) Send in your registration card!
  2) Include a disk with $2.00 OR no disk and $3.00 and get:
     a) The Background downloading enhancement.
     b) Multi-player modem games.
     c) Sample AutoPilot script files.
     d) Quarterly mailing of the "QMI Connection" newsletter.
     e) A chance to win $1000! After each increment of 10,000 copies are sold, we will pick a winner from the ST-Talk Pro owners who are registered up to that date.
- The first revision of ST-Talk Pro will be free of charge. Please report any problems so we can repair them as quickly as possible before the first update. We realize that nothing is perfect, especially computer software products! If you send in your registration card, you will be notified of updates. After the first revision, updates will be $2.00 with your disk or $3.00 without a disk.

Quantum Microsystems Inc., PO Box 179,
304 1st St., Liverpool, NY 13088 USA
(315)451-7747 (9am-6pm ET)
(315)457-7216 (24-hour BBS)
Genie: QMI
CompuServe: 71066,337

27 January, 1988: ATARI PRODUCT NEWS UPDATE

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MICROSOFT WRITE

In mid-January, the first shipments of Microsoft Write arrived at Atari's warehouse and were shipped to Atari dealers.

This advanced word processor, with a

list price of $129.95, is a direct port of Microsoft Word 1.05 from the Macintosh. It features true footnoting, a sophisticated variety of page setup features, and the cleanest mouse interface of any ST word processor.

Microsoft Write fully supports GDOS. Included with the program is GDOS version 1.8, along with a variety of proportional fonts. The fonts are supported on the screen for a WYSIWYG performance.

In addition to GDOS output, Microsoft Write supports a wide variety of common printers in their own text fonts. Printer drivers can be edited by the user to support virtually any printer on the market.

Microsoft Write includes extras such as Mail Merge, Glossary, Undo, Clipboard, Ruler and page format changes throughout the document.

ATARI LASER PRINTER

The Atari SLM804 Laser Printer arrived to authorized dealers beginning before the new year. This 8-page-per-minute system uses the TEC engine, a write-white device which provides the sharpest possible blacks. Dot density is 300 dots per inch.

The SLM804 connects directly to any ST or Mega computer via the DMA port. Included is the SLMC804, which allows additional DMA devices (such as hard disk drives) to be plugged into the DMA while the laser is attached.

The Atari Laser Printer's unique design has the ST or Mega driving the engine directly, without mandating costly and slow electronics within the laser. Even with only 512K of system RAM, an ST can drive the engine in Diablo emulation mode and for screen dumps. The Diablo emulator supports up to 8 type styles using GDOS fonts (GDOS itself is not required).

Also included with the printer are 2 disks of GDOS fonts. These laser fonts correspont to the screen fonts provided with Microsoft Write. Various point sizes are supported, from 6 point up to 48 point.

Existing software that takes advantage of GDOS includes MS Write and Easy Draw. Using Easy Draw, outputs make full use of the 300 dpi resolution of the printer for fine lines at any angle, smooth fonts, and bit images from scanners. Easy Draw with Supercharger can output full pages of text and graphics in well under a minute -- recent tests averaged 20-30 seconds per page. Multiple copies of a page take less time than the original page.

The Atari Laser Printer has a list price of $1999. Replacement toner cartridges sell for $59.95, and replacement drums list for $199.95. By seperating toner from drum, replacement costs and price per page come in lower than other laser printing systems.

27 January, 1988: ICD to Market OSS Software

ICD, Inc. and OSS, Inc. (Optimized Systems Software) have just signed an agreement under which ICD will add the manufacture, marketing, and support of all current OSS software titles for Atari computers to ICD's already powerful Atari product line.

ICD's friendly, helpful staff is now trained in all aspects of support for the complete OSS product line including:

MAC/65
MAC/65 Toolkit
ACTION!
ACTION! Toolkit
BASIC XL
BASIC XL Toolkit
BASIC XE
Writer's Tool
DOS XL
Personal PASCAL for the Atari ST

Ordering and support for ICD/OSS products are available by calling 815/968-2228 from 8AM to 5PM CST Monday through Friday.

Support is also available 24 hours a day 7 days a week on the following Electronic Bulletin Boards: ICD/OSS BBS 815/968-2229 300-9600 baud, CompuServe, GEnie, Delphi, and BIX. ICD's 24 hour FAX is connected to 815/968-6888.

The San Jose, CA numbers for OSS will no longer be providing support.

Orders for OSS products may be placed

now. All products will be shipping in quantities soon. For more information call any of our product support lines or write to:

ICD/OSS
1220 Rock Street
Rockford, IL 61101

9 February, 1988: ATARI TO DISPLAY NEW SYSTEMS

PC WEEK
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According to Sam Tramiel, CEO of Atari, Atari will show a line of 68030 based Unix workstations and small business systems at the Hanover Computer Show in Germany next month. "With the 68030 we will be attacking the workstation and business markets. I guess the best way to explain it is to compare it to the Mac II or a Sun - a very powerful machine with Unix that can also be a CPU for a whole network of Atari ST's."

While Mr. Tramiel declined to name a price, and would be no more precise on actual delivery than "second or third quarter 1988," sources close to the company said they expected the machine to come standard with AT&T Unix System V, Release 3, 4 megabytes of memory, a hard disk larger than 50 megabytes, an Ethernet port, and a high resolution color monitor manufactured by Atari, all for less than $4,000.

10 February, 1988: GFA ARTIST

MichTron Inc.
For Immediate Release

GFA ARTIST

MichTron presents GFA Artist, a vivid new animation program for the Atari ST that allows you creative flexibility. "It contains every possible graphic and animation function one could possibly ever use..." (ST World, Sept. 87).

Use GFA Artist to create pictures and complex animated forms and save them to disk. A special included program allows you to save them in a film file (a run-only version used without the program) so you can distribute your films to friends who don't own GFA Artist.

GFA Artist combines many special features of other animation programs into one package. You can incorporate text into your pictures in one of the four provided fonts or in a custom font you create with the Font Editor. You can create a cycling color effect, and even define your own fill pattern from part of your picture, instead of using a standard GEM fill pattern. You can merge several film files that have a file in common into a single file with the Film Merger. The Run Only Interpreter allows you to make extended films consisting of up to 20,000 frames.

GFA Artist effectively utilizes 2 different modes: Low-Res, the normal low resolution mode, and Low-Res Static, that lets you use over 1,000 colors on the screen at the same time. This is an ideal tool for making pictures with color transitions for a rainbow effect.

The special Function Selection Box integrates both low and medium resolution into one screen, combined with multiple palettes. You have the advantage of using the 80-character mode (medium resolution) for function selection together with the low resolution mode for artwork. This makes pull-down menus unnecessary.

For speedy constructions, GFA Artist integrates machine language with GFA BASIC. The mouse is used as the control and input device wherever possible instead of the keyboard for ultimate ease of use. The size of your sprites is only limited by the size of your screen. The program is automatically compatible with all standard screen formats (DEGAS, Color Star, Neochrome).

GFA Artist, from MichTron for $79.95, requires an Atari ST with 1 MB of RAM, TOS in ROM, and a color monitor.

THE JUGGLER

Michtron announces the release of The Juggler, a switching program that lets you keep up to seven GEM applications resident in memory at the same time on your Atari ST.

The Juggler allows multiple GEM programs to be stored in memory for ease and speed moving from one application program to another. The Juggler gives you the power of mobility without the hassle of saving files, exiting the application, and reloading the new one when you desire to change. Whether you need to move back and forth between several applications, or would just prefer to work on several things at once, The Juggler allows you to move back and forth quickly and with ease.

You can load up to seven files that you will have easy access to via the "switch board." Then with just a few clicks, you will instantly be where you want to be. The Juggler works with your Atari ST to switch you from inside any GEM program that supports a menu to another.

The Juggler not only recognizes files with a .PRG extension, but also those with .TOS and .TTP extensions as well. .PRG programs are run as if they were standard GEM applications, and can be juggled during operations. .TOS and .TTP applications will be run to completion, as if clicked on from the desktop, before being able to be juggled.

The Juggler is priced at $49.95.

For further information contact:
Robert Washburn
Michtron, Inc.

10 February, 1988: FONTZ!

a product announcement from Neocept, Inc.

To increase your font variety, Neocept, Inc., proudly announces Fontz!^{tm} ($34.95), the first full featured font creation and conversion program for the Atari ST. Fontz! gives you the ability to use Macintosh^{tm}, Amiga^{tm}, Hippo^{tm}, and Degas^{tm} fonts by converting them to the GEM^{tm} format. It will even scale fonts to practically any size or to the resolution of any device (for your printer and higher resolution screens--if the ST ever gets them). Fontz! will help you to create a logo, which you can access with a single keystroke from any full GEM program using GEM fonts with GDOS loaded.

Fontz!, available now, is a program written by the ACAOC's own Mike Fulton. Let's wish him the best of success with his program, FONTZ!

COMDEX - LAS VEGAS 1987

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By Anita Malnig, START Editor

Las Vegas, November 2, 1987 -- Atari intends to give the likes of Sun Microsystems and Apollo Computers a run for the money with Abaq (the root word for abacus), the new transputer-based workstation that the company is showing here.

By using RISC (Reduced Instruction Set Computer) architecture, the workstation will operate at 10 MIPS (million instructions per second). The latest graphics hardware and the IMS T-800 -- the Inmos Company's 32-bit microprocessor -- combine to form affordable, powerful personal workstations. A single transputer can deliver over ten times the power of an IBM PC AT. However, there's even greater strength in numbers. You can connect two, 10, 100 or even MORE transputers to create a relatively low-cost computer workstation with the power of a supercomputer. (Talk is that the price will be in the $5000 range.) When attached to a transputer, the ST or Mega acts as the input/output device for the system. Transputers can be linked via a built-in high-speed serial port to form a multiprocessor array or a local area network.

Helios, the Unix-like operating system, was developed by the Perihelion Company in Great Britain, as was the transputer board itself. The Helios operating system encourages the use of many small programs which work together to create a final product.

Shiraz Shivji, Atari's vice president of research and development, expects that the transputer will be used primarily in engineering and science applications. Included with Abaq will be a very high resolution monitor, capable of four graphics modes: 1280 X 960 in 16 colors or monochrome; 1024 X 768 in 256 colors; 640 X 480 in 256 colors with two screens; and 512 X 480 in 16 million colors plus overlay. No firm delivery date is set, but late 1988 seems to be the most talked-about time frame.

CD-ROM FOR ATARI

The exciting CD-ROM player introduced at Comdex can read up to 540 megabytes of data or play music. It connects to Atari's ST and Mega computers through the DMA (direct memory access) port, a communications port that transmits data at up to 10 million bits per second. At 540Mb, the player can store more data than 1,000 floppy disks or 200,000 printed pages.

Demonstrated at the show was an English and French visual dictionary from Facts on File. It is categorized by topics such as transportation and food: click on the transportation theme and choose from an array of topics such as ferrys, container ships, airport terminals and so on -- all items illustrated. Speech output identifies each image in French and English. Grolier's Encyclopedia also runs on this CD-ROM, as do audio CDs. Atari has a task force at work now developing more products for this player, which will be available at computer specialty dealers and retail outlets in February, 1988, at a suggested retail price of $599.

ATARI DESKTOP PUBLISHING

G.O. Graphics, in conjunction with Atari, will bring to market a sophisticated desktop publishing program called Deskset. This works as a front end to CompuGraphics typesetting equipment, offering the use of 1,800 fonts. This is not just a desktop publishing program for four-page newsletters and the like: it could design entire publications such as Antic and START. It will output to laser printers such as the striking Atari laser printer, also being demonstrated with Deskset.

Deskset, which works only on a Mega, will work within the GEM environment and offers all the standard features of the most sophisticated desktop publishing programs -- features such as character compensation, kerning, columns, boxes, rules and the ability to merge text and graphics. Look for this product mid- to late 1988.

From Timeworks comes the Timeworks Desktop Publisher ST. Retailing for $129.95 this GEM-based program will offer WYSIWYG display, over 1,200 possible type-style combinations, ability to import graphics, and laser printer compatibility. Desktop Publisher ST will be available in the first quarter of 1988.

Soft Logik Corp. announced a new version of its desktop publishing program, Publishing Partner Professional. New features include automatic textflow around graphic images, automatic hyphenation and kerning, the ability to import documents from other word processors such as WordPerfect, First Word and Word Writer, more fonts and font manipulation. It will retail for $149.95.

From ISD Marketing comes Calamus, a page-layout and typesetting application. It uses outline fonts and vector graphics that until now could only be processed by expensive Postscript laser printers. Calamus uses these features on both the printer and screen. The program offers a spelling checker and hyphenated dictionary, object-oriented graphics, chart forms, and font editors using Bezier curves for designing or changing fonts. Calamus for the Mega will be available in December 1987 for $349.95.

MichTron offers GFA Publisher, a GEM-controlled program with full-featured text editor, automatic text flow and paging, expandable font library and an integrated driver for PostScript.

From Migraph comes the supercharged Easy Draw. Supercharger, a companion product to Easy Draw, makes it easy to load graphics from popular paint programs. While not a desktop publishing program, these two combined products let you create newsletters, reports, brochures, etc. You can work with ASCII files, have justified and non-justified text, use onscreen grids and rulers and output to the Atari laser printer.

WORD PROCESSING -- ALIVE AND WELL

WordPerfect for the ST is out and is called by some the Cadillac of word processors. In addition to a built-in thesaurus and spell-checker, the program has math functions and can create indexes,and tables of contents. There are also macros, merge functions and onscreen columns. The product is shipping now for $395 list.

From Microsoft comes the long-awaited Write, marketed by Atari Corp. It handles complex business reports as well as memos and letters. It has all the standard text generation, editing and formatting features such as cut-and-paste, creating footnotes, automatic pagination, different font styles and sizes, and it works in conjunction with the Atari Laser printer.

MORE CAD PROGRAMS

Drafix, from Foresight Resources, is now on the market and drawing critical acclaim. It's identical to the 1.00 IBM PC version, supports pen plotters, and runs on color and monochrome Atari monitors.

Coming soon from Migraph is M/CADD, a professional engineering graphics design system for the Atari Mega. M/CADD outputs directly to HPGL-compatible plotters and saves in GEM format for output on 9- and 24-pin dot-matrix printers. M/CADD files can be loaded into Migraph's Easy Draw, and you can add more text and either bit-mapped or object-oriented graphics. Suggested price is $499. M/CADD should ship by the end of November.

With MichTron's Master CAD, you can produce objects in 2-D and 3-D using its exclusive concept of Projection Planes. It uses pull-down menus, dialog boxes, the mouse and very few keyboard commands. Expect to see this in early 1988.

DESKTOP VIDEO

From Antic Software in conjunction with Sony comes a desktop video package. Sony's low-cost 8mm video hardware and Antic's video sequencer software create professional-quality 3-D computer-graphics videotapes of up to two hours. The Antic software controls nine functions of the Sony VCR, then adds its own special visual effects such as fades and auto assemble/editing. The 8mm video sequencing software (including custom parallel cables) will be available in January 1988 from Antic Software. The Sony video equipment is available from Sony.

MORE GRAPHIC FUN

From Neriki Computer Graphics PTY Ltd. in Australia comes the ZImagemaster, software with a hardware box to attach to your ST. Hooking up the Polaroid Palette can output DEGAS pictures as Polaroid pictures, and you can attach a 35mm camera to the Palette. The package yields overhead transparencies and printouts. It will retail for $400.

Antic Software is also showing Spectrum 512, its 512-color paint program, which expands the ST's normally limited palette of 16 colors to 512. Spectrum 512 can load and enhance pictures from existing ST software as well as from Amiga picture files. Available now for $69.95.

Animation comes from Antic Software as well with Cyber Paint, also $69.95. It emulates the functions of a $100,000 Quantel Paintbox -- but for computer graphics instead of live video. Cyber Paint is a member of the Cyber family of desktop video products. Its many features include smooth raster tweening along any 3-D path, professional optical effects with planar rotations through 3-D space, and moviola-style cut-and-paste.

MORE BUSINESS BITS

From SBT comes the Database Accounting Library, menu-driven with options to confirm, change or cancel entries . . . From Progressive Peripherals comes Superbase Personal, a relational database, and the Logistik time/project management system. . . B.E.S.T. Inc. offers B.E.S.T. Business Management, an integrated accounting system offering general ledger. Available now, suggested retail price is $395. . . ISD Marketing, which brings you the well-known VIP, now has the MasterPlan financial spreadsheet featuring the GEM environment with pull-down menus, icons, scroll bars and column grabbers. It offers graphics features as well. Also from ISD is an update to STAccounts, the integrated accounting package. . . From Royal Software comes additional low-cost business programs such as Help Calc, templates for their E-Z Calc and VIP. Coming soon will be Inventory Master for $99.95.

MIDI

Hybrid Arts was showing ADAP and ADAP 2, the digital editing system. ADAP 2 works directly with a hard disk. Also just released is Easy Score, Hybrid Arts' new scoring program.

NEW HARD DRIVE

In mid-December ICD will ship its new 100 megabyte hard disk for $1,699.

AND. . . ATARI PC'S

The Atari PC1, introduced earlier this year, can be used as a local area network workstation or as a standalone personal computer. It runs at a top speed of 8 Mhz, with a software switch to set the clock speed to 4.77 when needed. The PC1 works with any CGA, MDA, EGA or multi-frequency monitor. Maximum color screen resolution is 640 X 350. The PC1 has a 64-color palette, with a maximum of 16 on the screen at a time. It is expected to retail for $800.

New to the Atari PC family is the PC2, a dual-speed XT compatible with five slots and hard-disk support. The PC4 is an 80286 microprocessor-based IBM PC/AT compatible machine. It has clock speeds of either 8 or 12 Mhz, VGA-compatible video, four AT-style expansion slots, up to one megabyte of system RAM and is ready for an 80287 numeric coprocessor.

Additionally, Atari is announcing "Moses PromiseLAN," a local area network that can connect up to 17 PCs using off-the-shelf telephone wire. They will also be developing Moses PromiseLAN adaptors for its Mega and ST computers. Thus, the Mega and Atari laser printer will be able to share data with PCs and Apple Macintoshes.

COMDEX WRAP-UP

San Francisco, November 6, 1987 -- Comdex closed its doors today after a five-day convention that attracted more than 90,000 delegates.

In addition to the plethora of products at the Atari booth was a variety of items scattered throughout the Las Vegas Convention Center and various hotels.

From Quantum Microsystems Inc., (QMI) comes a low-cost graphics tablet for the ST. The "ProTablet ST" replaces the mouse pointer device with an accurate digitizer tablet and stylus pen. It works with programs such as Drafix, Degas, Easy Draw and CAD 3D. The tablet has a working area of 12.0 x 8.0 inches and a physical dimension of 17.5 x 11.0 x 1.2 inches. It's available now and has a retail price of $395.

"ChartPak" from Abacus software lets you do business graphics on your ST. Create visual messages from raw numerical data. Use clip art or pictures from PaintPro or Degas-compatible programs. It's on the market now.

"PrintMaster Plus" from Unison World lets you design banners, newsletters, letterhead and the like. You can create and edit your own work and use art from the PrintMaster Art Galleries. Use multiple graphics on a single page, use different typefaces and styles and print reverse image copies of iron-on T-shirt decals. Available now for $39.95.

From Kyocera Unison, Inc. comes the Kyocera laser printer. It prints 10 pages per minute, gives sharp text, graphics and bar code styles. It has 79 resident fonts, eight foreign language character sets, plus three flexible, user modifiable dynamic fonts for typestyle creativity. It will retail for $2,895.

From Knowledgeware (distributed by Michtron) comes "Viva Presents," an interactive desktop presentation system. Through the use of a visual construction set represented by icons, the user can put together templates to create a visual storyboard for the interactive presentation he is writing.

"Interlink ST" from Intersect Software Corp. is an advanced telecommunications package. It features autodialing, automatic redialing, password protected remote access, a text editor, background downloading and more. Interlink comes free with introductory subscription packages to GEnie, Delphi, CompuServe and The Source.

Hi-Tech Expressions brings Sesame Street to your children with six preschool computer software learning games: "Big Bird's Special Delivery," "Astro Grover," "Ernie's Big Splash," "Grover's Animal

Adventures," and "Pals Around Town." Only $9.95 apiece.

Programs such as "Quantum Paintbox," "Pro Sound Designer," "Pro Midi," and "Pro Drum" come to you from Eidersoft, distributed from Computer Software Services (CSS). Quantum Paintbox offers a paint program with 4096 colors. Pro-Sound Designer is a sound sampling package with 3-30 kHz sampling, record, playback, reverse, cut, copy and more. It retails for $129.95. Pro-Midi is a complete MIDI sample/sequencer for use with Pro Sound Designer and Pro Drum using samples of real drums can create complex percussion patterns. The last two products retail for $29.95.

From Supra Corporation comes "The Supramodem 2400," a compact model that supports asynchronous operation at 300, 1200 and 2400 bps. It has an automatic answer/automatic dial, two modular phone jacks, programmable speaker volume and a one-year warranty. It is completely Hayes-compatible and retails for $179.95. Supra also has the SupraDrive FD-10, a 10MG removable floppy disk which connects to the DMA port. It retails for $895.

A popular game from a new company is "Dark Castle" from Three-Sixty, Inc. The company was founded in March 1987 by Thomas Frisina, formerly president of Accolade Software. The company will create, develop and market software for the Atari ST series.

This was a successful, busy Comdex for Atari and we at Antic Publishing look forward to covering the products from Atari and third-party developers as they become available.

THE NAMM EXPERIENCE

by Larry Weinheimer

Trying to describe a convention the magnitude of NAMM to someone who has not experienced a show is along the lines of the blind men describing the elephant. I was amazed, confused, overjoyed, and disappointed, all within my four hour tour of NAMM. Admittedly this is not a sufficient time to experience a NAMM show, but within that time I felt I had soaked up enough to last me a year.

Atari's booth was made up of several software companies showing their MIDI software. Among the guests were Sonus, Dr. T, Hybrid Arts, and a number of others. Also present in the booth was Leonard Tramiel using Microsoft's Write on a Mega 4 and a laser printer.

Mr. Tramiel was kind enough to spend several minutes with me explaining how he is using Write for Desktop publishing. The SLM804 was putting out high quality printing while we discussed the hardware requirements. Seems you'll need 1.2 meg just to compose a full page to print to the laser. It will emulate a Diablo for 520 and 1040 owners without the extra memory, but I feel it would be like having a motorcycle with training wheels.

Dr. T was showing their new products which include a multi-program environment. While utilizing the sequencer it is possible to have the patch editor in background so you can call it up when you need it. It is most impressive.

The programmer from Sonus took time to show me the new blitter and ROMs. He is in much the same boat as all of us, owning an ST and wanting the new features of the Mega. No one was discussing upgrades of ROMs or blitters.

What pleased me the most was the proliferation of STs. There seemed to be a 1040 in every booth utilizing MIDI, unless it was Apple or an Apple support company.

It seems that Atari has found a niche, and it's getting bigger.

I came away with one quote from the show. It was made by a buyer to Leonard Tramiel which caused him to smile ear to ear. The man simply walked up to him and said, "I'd like to thank you for putting MIDI in this machine".

Mr. Tramiel's response?

"Glad to do it!"

Make the News

HEADLINES

THE PUBLICATION OF DEDICATED EASY – DRAW USERS • VOLUME I • ISSUE 1

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Continued on page 4.

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HYPERCARD FOR THE ST?

by Garry Jones

When I first heard about Hypercard on Apple's Macintosh computer, I thought, "Hey, cool. I'll get a Magic Sac, and then I can run Hypercard on my ST." No such luck. Hypercard requires Apple's 128K roms to run, and, as of this writing, will not run on the Magic Sac. I was disappointed until I realized I already had a Hypercard-like program for my ST. It's called Zoomracks.

Let me explain what this type of software does. Apple's Hypercard allows information to be placed on "cards," the computerized equivalent of a stack of 3" X 5" index cards. These cards can be organized in a vertical manner, just like index cards. But where Hypercard departs from the index card metaphor is in its ability to link information on any card with information on any other card in any other stack, or with a whole stack. This allows information to be linked in a freeform manner, both horizontally and vertically. Also, Hypercard contains its own programming language which makes it possible to create custom commands for searching and processing the information contained in the stacks of cards. All of this can be accessed through the Macintosh's familiar icon and menu system. At least that's the basic idea (this description really doesn't do justice to the Hypercard program.)

Zoomracks, like Hypercard, allows information to be recorded on cards; but unlike Hypercard, Zoomracks' cards are placed in racks like time card racks. A series of "Zoom" commands allow the cards to be examined ever more closely, beginning with a view of several racks lined up across the screen, to a view of the top line of each card, to a close up view of any text field on the card. Zoomracks also has sort and search commands, a mini text editor, and a macro language which allows the user to create custom commands. All very similar to Hypercard, with the biggest difference being Zoomracks' text oriented interface.

I've always liked the "zoomrack" concept of the program, but thought it would have been better implemented with a GEM interface. I've brought this up because Paul Heckel (Zoomracks' designer) has made progress toward completing Zoomracks III, which will give Zoomracks the GEM interface I think it needs. Also, in order to raise development capitol, he has a special offer for Atari ST users.

Here is what Paul Heckel has to say about Zoomracks and Hypercard, a list of features proposed for Zoomracks III, and a special offer for individuals interested in purchasing Zoomracks.

Excerpts from a letter from Paul Heckel of QuickView Systems
26 January, 1988

"Apple Computer, the leader in personal computers, has validated Zoomracks as the wave of the future. In August, John Sculley, Apple's president, announced what he called his most exciting introduction since the Macintosh itself. The product is HyperCard, and it is bundled with every Macintosh. Many of you have told me that HyperCard seems similar to Zoomracks. It is! However, it uses cards in stacks rather than racks -- it's as if you could use Zoomracks, only in single card, single rack mode.

"HyperCard is stronger in graphics, initial impression, ease of first use, fonts, hypertext links, ability to access data on hard disk, and its variety of programming features -- all capabilities we planned for Zoomracks versions -- long before HyperCard.

"We think Zoomracks is better: it uses racks (not stacks); it doesn't require a hard disk; it has flexible output formatting; except for the first day, it is easier to learn and use; it lets you do much more without programming. You probably can't run a business with just HyperCard, but you can with Zoomracks.

"We think Zoomracks' basic concept is better: Its macros are simpler to use than HyperCard's programming language. It will be easier for us to include HyperCard capability in future versions of Zoomracks than for HyperCard to include Zoomracks capability. Most important -- Zoomracks is documented in less than 200 pages; HyperCard in an 800-page book.

"Apple's Sculley was gracious enough to say in a January 'Microtimes' interview: 'HyperCard isn't the first... We had Owl Guide, we had other products, Zoomracks...' (Owl Guide, the only other product he mentioned, is a conventional hypertext product and can't do most things Zoomracks can.)

"Alan Kay, the Apple Fellow whom Sculley credits with bringing HyperCard to his attention, called Zoomracks 'an important new metaphor from the author of the best book on user interface design.' In the early 70's at Xerox PARC Alan's group pioneered the windowing, mouse, menu, and icons that are used in the Macintosh and GEM. It is gratifying to receive such recognition for Zoomracks from such leaders."

Zoomracks III: The Future

"We have been developing a version of Zoomracks that already contains several substantial new features. Already WORKING are:

(a) Better, more graphic user interface
- A mode that toggles on the outline of the racks, cards in racks, and fields making the metaphor more visual.
- The four arrows always move visually on the screen.

(b) Better printing control
- Bold, italic, underline, condensed and other printing control characters.
- Up to 132 character wide printing.
- You can print as few as one character of a field.
- A ".b" option in output format prevents blank lines in labels from being output.
- A Print Field command.
- An F Z (output Zoomrack to Fieldscroll command).

(c) Other Upgrades
- Save, restore and reformat Rack 0 and keep non-Zoomracks files on it (a disk directory with comments).
- Switch folders from within Zoomracks.
- Drives E and beyond can be used.
- Specify the number of display racks in multirack mode.

- Single line edit word wraps.
- Autobackup leaves you on the current card.
- Cut line cuts up to a full field.
- You can define the macro $.
- If there is not enough room to show a full rack name, its number is not displayed.
- You can paste the calculator in the editor.
- Dialout.
- A user profile rack lets you specify default colors, autobackup times, and bell on/off.
- Several bugs are fixed.
- Several details add polish.
- A toggle lets you view your racks full width but short in multirack mode.
- Supports foreign languages.

"Other features planned for Zoomracks III include:

- A GEM interface with pull-down menus.
- Ability to work with desk accessories.
- Ability to take advantage of all memory on the Megas.
- More use of mouse, especially in word processing.
- Graphics capability, including buttons.
- Communications capability.
- Hypertext links.
- Justification in the word processor.
- Centering in the word processor.
- Fonts in the word processor.
- More powerful mathematics.
- Logical operators for search.
- Multiple field sort.
- More powerful macros, including macros calling macros."

Zoomracks III: Buy Now and Save $100

"We plan to introduce Zoomracks III in June at a retail price of $295 on the ST, and $195 on the PC. We feel that the utility of Zoomracks III justifies this price, and the small number of Atari ST's over which the cost must be amortized make it ecomomically necessary.

"We are making the following offer to you and your friends. Purchase Zoomracks II from us now at $119.95, and we will send a free Zoomracks III upgrade when it is available... By acting now, your Atari friends can save $175 and your MS_DOS friends can save $75. This offer is good until March 31, 1988.

PC/ST Version

"Many of you use (or will use) both the Atari ST and MS_DOS computers and want to use Zoomracks on both. To meet this need, we have a 'Zoomracks PC Extension,' a Zoomracks MS_DOS disk, available for $19.95. Your license agreement lets you run Zoomracks on only one computer at a time, just as only one person can read a book at a time. The PC extender lets you use Zoomracks on MS_DOS computers as well as Atari STs, but still only one computer at a time. Obviously, it is available only to registered Atari Zoomracks owners and doesn't convey the ownership of a second copy of Zoomracks. A Zoomracks III PC extender will sell for the same $19.95 price."

COMPATIBILIZING YOUR EPSON PRINTER

by Bill Bentley

When I bought an ST and installed it next to my 800, I naturally assumed that I could switch my faithful old Epson MX printer between the two computers without any problem. This turned out to be not quite true.

It seems that the 800 programs, like Letter Perfect and Data Perfect, do not send a "Line Feed" character along with each "Carriage Return." Instead, they demand that the Epson automatically provide that action. The Epson is happy to do this as long as switch 2-3, inside the printer, is set to ON. Thus, the first thing everyone had to do when they bought an Epson for the 800 was take it apart and set that switch.

Now comes the ST, and apparently most of its programs, such as the screen dump and Easy-Draw (but not HabaWriter) provide their own Line Feeds. This requires that switch 2-3 be set to OFF, because, believe me, Easy-Draw pictures look very strange when printed out with an automatic Line Feed.

The answer to this is not to buy another printer or to keep a crochet hook handy to probe inside the Epson for the switch. It turns out that the line which carries this "Auto LF" signal from switch 2-3 is also brought out of the printer through pin 14 of the Parallel Interface connector. To make use of this line, try the following:

1. At some convenient place, probably at the control box that switches the printer between the two computers, connect a wire between pin 14 and one side of a single-pole-single-throw switch.
2. Connect another wire between the other side of the switch and pin 19 (ground).
3. Open up the Epson (for the last time) and set switch 2-3 to OFF (it will now match all of the other switches in that block).

When the switch you have added is closed it is in the "Auto LF" position and each Carriage Return will cause the printer to provide an automatic Line Feed (800 position). When it is open, the computer must provide the Line Feed (ST position).

ST-LOG REVIEW

by Garry Jones

In January of 1987 Analog 400/800 Corporation (ANALOG magazine) began publishing the spin-off magazine, ST-LOG. The purpose of ST-LOG was to provide a magazine whose content was specific to the Atari ST computers, while maintaining ANALOG as a publication for Atari computers in general, but with the primary emphasis on Atari's 8-bit computers.

After reading issues from February, April, and June, I can see the pattern of the magazine's editorial concept emerging. The magazine seems to be trying to be all things to all people, with articles and features ranging from explanations of the ST's desktop and operating system for the first-time user all the way up to regular columns on programming in C and assembly language.

For instance, a regular feature with the generic title STEP 1 began in February with an explanation of hardware terms common to most computer systems as well as those specific to the ST. RAM (Random Access Memory) and ROM (Read Only Memory) were explained, as were TOS, GEM, and memory measurement (memory is measured in K, or kilobytes, with the 520 ST having 512K of memory and the 1040ST having 1024k). There was also a description of the different monitors available for the ST, followed by a discussion of hard and floppy disks. The February issue of STEP 1 closed with explanations of various peripherals, such as modems, printers, and surge protectors.

Two months later, the April installment of STEP 1 covered some of the subtleties of the GEM desktop and the dialog and alert boxes that appear at different times. The most significant dialog box to be explained was the GEM file selector. Changing the default disk and the directory path as well as scrolling the files within the box were covered, and the discussion of the file selector box included a tip for speeding up interactions with the file selector by double clicking on the desired file.

In June, STEP 1 cleaned up some loose ends with further discussion of hard and floppy disks, plus an explanation of ramdisks and print spoolers.

Features in the three issues I read included reports on Atari in Germany, Atari's promised release of the Mega ST, the Atari PC, a laser printer, and the availability of a blitter chip upgrade for the 520 ST. Also, there was a preview of Publishing Partner and a beginner's guide to telecommunications.

ST-LOG also carried reviews in the three issues I read. There were 12 game reviews, 10 application reviews, and 2 hardware reviews for a fairly even balance between entertainment and application software. Among the items reviewed were Abacus Datatrieve and Regent Base databases, Flight Simulator II, the QMS KISS laser printer, GFA Basic, the Magic Sac, Electronic Arts' Arcticfox, and Sierra On-Line's series of Quest adventures.

There were also a number of programming articles in each issue, from the regular feature on C programming, C-manship, to columns on assembly language and GFA Basic. Individual programming articles included a printer font editor and installer written in ST Basic to a label printer and a shell program for ARC.TTP written in assembly language. While some of the programming articles were strictly instructional in nature, there were some that provided clearly useful software.

Overall, my impressions of ST-LOG are fairly good. Personally, I could do without the beginner's articles as it reduces the amount of material available to more advanced users, but this is valuable reference information for the novice user and ST-LOG should be commended for taking this group seriously enough to provide a complete series of articles detailing the operation of the ST computers. Sometimes ST-LOG overemphasizes game reviews in individual issues, but over several issues the number of game reviews versus application and hardware reviews tends to even out.

My biggest criticism of ST-LOG concerns articles which describe a program, but fail to provide either source code or an ST Basic program maker in the magazine, instead placing the program on disk. Since ST-LOG does not tout itself as a disk-based magazine, and because it's difficult enough to locate ST-LOG magazine by itself, let alone with the disk included, I think the failure to include all programs in the magazine penalizes the majority of buyers who purchase the magazine without the disk.

As well as seeing all programs printed in the magazine, I would like to see commented source code included with the programs listed only in the form of ST Basic program maker files.

To close, ST-LOG is a good magazine for the beginning to intermediate user, with its major competition coming primarily from ST X-PRESS and COMPUTE!'s ST magazines. ST-LOG is probably hurt in the market because its distribution is not as good as that of its parent publication, ANALOG, but if distribution improves the magazine will probably succeed. However, I warn any potential purchasers to check the program listings to make sure that any program that interests them is actually printed in the magazine and not available on disk only.

PARTIAL TEXT OF CONFERENCE ON DELPHI REGARDING ANALOG BUYOUT

17 January, 1988

ATTENDANTS:
Andy Eddy (moderator)
Lee Pappas (Analog Computing)
Clayton Walnum (Analog Computing)
Ian Chadwick (Contributing Editor)
Wild Bill -- Bill Colburn
Whitewizard -- Robbie Bongiovi
Steven Mortimer

Andy> Lee Pappas is publisher of Analog/ST-Log magazines. He is here today to explain the current situation and answer your questions. Lee, would you like to start by giving the lowdown on what is going on and what has taken place in the past few weeks?

Lee> First, ANALOG has signed contracts with a publishing company in LA. That company is LFP, Inc.... Larry Flynt Publishing. We expect to have the next issues of both mags out in 3 weeks. Let me give a few words about the changes... First ... Larry Flynt has little to do with daily operations of the company ... as a whole. He will have nothing to do with the editorial contents of either magazine. Changes you will see include new (glossy) paper, a heavier stock inside as well as a heavier cover. More color pages throughout, INCREASED distribution, much improved service, and a steady frequency. What you won't see is ads for Hustler and the like.

The last issue of ANALOG was October, September for ST-Log... While we have 4 issues sitting at our office right now,... none were sent in the interim between ... when negotiations began and the signing of the contract.

Chadwick> Is the editorial lineup changing at all? Are we writers still going to have our columns? Can we expect a different editorial focus?

Lee> The new buyers don't know the Atari field AT ALL. Columns (I take it you refer to Ian's Quest!) will remain. It is up to me, and ultimately the readers, which columns remain. However, your's is one of the favorites and WILL remain...

The company buying us out is a 50 million dollar plus set up... They will add tremendous stability to our publications and contributing authors will not ever have to worry about their pay and when they get it. The power we will have behind us will allow us to to things we could never do before...

WHY is a complex answer. First - WHY NOT? I couldn't see the company growing much further the way things have been, so this gives us a chance to expand greatly... plus I'll be working on new publications, both computer and non-computer related in the next few years.

Also, LFP, Inc. offered us a very good deal... and who really knows how long Atari will keep going? This way I can expand on my interests and do other things along with the Atari field -- after all, I have been doing this for 7 years. We needed to expand, and as do airlines, insurance companies and so on. We were bought out to expand our capabilities...

Wild Bill> How about something a la Compute! Books?

Lee> Sure, that would be great, when there is enough info to fill one. I would like to mention it to LFP when Clay and I get things rolling after a couple issues hit the stands...

Whitewizard> You said that Analog depends on the 8-bit... Does this mean that you might stop publishing in the future if the 8-bit fails (Analog, not ST-Log)?

Lee> Analog depends on the 8-bit market... Lets say that advertising right now isn't overwhelming and Analog would most likely take a new heading (orientation) in the event 8-bits REALLY dwindle. I could see us doing one mag--but here is the problem. The ANALOG name is the best known, if we put in ST-Log then the mag becomes a general Atari mag again. If we kill ANALOG and continue ST-Log... well, ANALOG has the better known name and that would be a mistake. Chances are ST-Log might have some 8-bit coverage... When we are in place after a couple months we'll look at the whole picture...

Steve M.> What direction will ST Log be taking in terms of content?

Clay> The combination we've had in the past has worked out well, I think. I don't see any reason to change it. (More pages would be nice.)...

ALICE IN MODEMLAND

by Shirley Lewis

Listening to Bob Brodie at our July meeting finally convinced me that I wanted to jump headlong into the world of tele-computing. He had written an inspired article in the OrnJuce. So being fully inspired and with the price of 1200 baud modems coming down, I set out on my adventure.

Bob had informed us at the meeting that A. J. Computers of Seal Beach was selling an AVATEX 1200HC modem for $75.00. He even gave us the address and phone number. What could be easier? Letting my fingers do the walking, I called. The first obstacle. They only sold direct from their Seal Beach location in minimum orders of TEN units. (That computes to $750, some bargain). The second obstacle. They did not have any in stock and were on backorder from the manufacturer. The salesperson on the other end of the phone was very helpful. I was informed that they did sell in single units at the local swapmeets. A. J. Computers would be at the Orange County Fairgrounds Computer swapmeet on the following Sunday and at the one at the Pomona Fairgrounds in a couple of weeks.

Scheduling has always been a difficult part of my life. Therefore, I did not make a trip until the Pomona swapmeet. The first surprise was that it cost $5.00 to get in. That was OK because I was going to save some money. Once inside the gate, there were lots of people handing out flyers telling you about the wares you were about to see. (Mostly PC stuff, but I was here for a specific product.) Following my normal methodical approach to visiting this type of event, it took me a while to find the A. J. Computer space. (It was actually within ten feet of the entrance.)

I talked with the salesperson. After discussing that I was going to use the modem with an Atari 130XE, we decided that I should try and locate someone in the building who might offer cables to connect the two together. So off I go again. (Now remember, I am a zero when it comes to electronic wizardry.) I had remembered that Atari some time in the distant past decided to have their own special plugs while the rest of the world went with standard pin configurations. Basically I thought that I was just looking for some sort of strange cable, Atari plug on one end and standard plug on the other.

Off I go looking at all the booths very closely. They have just about everything you would want for your computer, except Atari software. Paper, printers, ribbons, discs, storage boxes, computers (mostly PC's or clones), public domain software (PC again), and lots of people. At times they were so thick that you could not get up to the tables. I couldn't find any strange looking cables and no one to talk to me. Finally, tucked away in a corner, I found a booth where they had all types of connectors. This guy actually had some Atari cables. So I decided to stay there until someone would talk to me. At long last it was my turn. I explained what I thought was the problem. He did not have such a cable and was not sure where I could get it. He was helpful in that if I could come up with some specifications, he would make one for me. We could do it by the mail.

Back to booth one. I bought the AVATEX 1200HC. The price was now $99. The salesperson suggested some software to run it. Being an advocate of the idea that you could never have too much software, I said yes. Out the door and home.

I decided to try some of our local stores to see if they could help me in my plight to hook up my new purchase. The first stop was very frustrating. After I finally got the eye of the salesperson, they said that I would need this strange looking box and a cable. The total was over $100. The cable had no Atari plugs and they did not explain why I needed the box. Feeling that I was being suckered I said that I did not have that much money and politely left.

To try and clear my ignorance, I did some research. Surprise! Surprise! We had a basic problem. The good ole Atari only understood parallel info and a modem spit out serial data. That was why I needed the funny little box. I also learned that ICD had a new product which would perform that function as well as provide the same service for when I got a real printer. Since the AtariFest Ver. 2.0 was not too far in the future I decided to wait.

AtariFest arrived. I, with my hard cold cash, was ready. I found those ICD guys before the place even opened. A mere $63. Later I was the proud owner of an ICD P/R connector and the cable. It pays to be early. They sold out before 2 p.m.

Back at the ranch. . . I begin hooking things together. I even have room on my power strip. One thing I did notice was that there are no specific directions anywhere saying, "This is what you do 1,2,3. . ."

In I jump. The basic connecting plug 1 here and cord 2 here was pretty straight forward. Now to run the software. Boot the disc. Nothing. Boot the disc. Still nothing. Hmmmm. . . Maybe I should try it without basic. Depress Option button.. Boot the disc. Voila. . . I have a menu. Let's try calling a number. Nothing. . . Back and forth. I mean really. There are little switches on the back of the modem. There are buttons on the front. Trial and error and 2-3 weeks later I finally got another computer to answer me. Well that isn't exactly true. The screen said "Connect," but nothing was happening.

Luckily, right about now I remembered that Mike Fulton had written a long article in the January, 1987 OrnJuce about our new bulletin board. Following his article and the doc file that came with my 850 Xpress, I finally entered the world of telecommunications with my Atari. I can call our BBS. I have joined Genie. One of the most fun things is the Online Roundtables. I still don't understand why the Atari sysop Darlah likes green jello; and, maybe I never will. I have found out that there are people programming for the eight bit computers out there. I have a source for when I am completely frustrated with the latest Infocom story. Actually I have spent so much time with the modem hook up that I have been falling behind on the latest.

Jump in. Try the world of telephone/computer links. Genie has a special program through the end of the yearwhich allows you to join without paying the usual signup fee of $18.95. In January their charges are going up to $29.95. So even if you have to borrow one join now. Our club has both 300 baud and 1200 baud modems for rent at $5.00 per month with a small deposit. So what are you waiting for?

INTERLINK: a review.

Ripped off from a pirate magazine.

Interlink, for those unfamiliar with this new program, is a telecommunications program designed to supersede the current two biggies: Flash! and ST-Term. As Flash! is a more popular terminal program than ST-Term, I will make the majority of my comparisons against it.

Flash! has been around for a while. Its advantages include a large dial directory, Xmodem and Ymodem capabilities, the ability to use desk accessories, and its built-in text editor.

Interlink, however, has all this and more. Like Flash!, it supports VT-52 graphics. But, if you are unsatisfied with the colors, you can easily alter them to your liking. It also supports Kermit, Xmodem, and Ymodem as standards (Kermit can be added to Flash! by using a desk accessory that also allows a remote mode). Perhaps more exciting is the ???? protocol. By selecting this box, Interlink prompts you to select a protocol from disk. Currently, there are no disk based protocols, but the ability to add them is there! Supposedly, the Ymodem-batch protocol is in the works.

There is a similar feature for terminal emulation. Interlink will normally emulate a VT-52, but by clicking on the ???? box on the terminal setup screen, you can load in different terminal emulators. Again, none are available at present, but VT-100 has been promised.

Interlink also features a built-in 'Answer Mode.' Three security levels are offered: High, Medium, and Low, each with its own password. The remote user can upload, download, chat with the Sysop, leave messages, and view ASCII files. There is also a 'Keyboard' mode which simulates the Sysop's logging on. You can test out your system before your callers. Its like getting a mini-BBS! Sure, Flash! has a remote module, but it is nothing compared to Interlink's.

Yet another feature of Interlink is its ability to perform most GEM commands without having to quit the program. You can also execute a program from within Interlink. This means that if you loaded Interlink, and decided you wanted to use a ramdisk, you could run the ramdisk program directly from Interlink.

Interlink's capture buffer is also superior. It truly resembles a word processor, and also has a clipboard so that you can easily cut and paste within a document. Word search and several 'block' options are also available. Like Flash!, Interlink strips the colors from any text in its capture buffer.

The dialing directories of Flash! and Interlink each have their advantages and disadvantages. Flash! has an extremely large directory, and provides more than enough space for a BBS or information system's name. Interlink, however, provides space for only five letters of a BBS's name, and there is space for far fewer entries than in Flash! Each entry in Interlink is unique, though. Each can contain a different setup for screen colors and terminal features, and groups of numbers can be dialed automatically.

Convinced that Interlink is just a little better than Flash? If not, wait until you read this: Interlink as one ace-in-the-hole feature that no other terminal program has. Interlink has the ability to do recordings. I know, "What the heck is that, and what's so special about it?" Well, let me explain. An Interlink recording is a file composed of your keystrokes, and the time in between keystrokes. A little confused? Let me give you an example:

You turn on the recorder, and name you record file 'MAIL.' Then, you call, say XYZ BBS. Once online, you proceed to read all new messages, and read mail addressed to you. Then, you enter the files section, and see what's new. After that, you log off, and save the contents of your capture buffer to disk. Finally, you shut off the recording.

This record file contains a record of your keystrokes and your pauses. If you play back the file you just made, it will re-perform all the functions you just did. The beauty of the record files is that they can be activated at any time from within Interlink. Just program the timer to play the 'MAIL' recording at 12:00 AM, and when you wake up the next morning, you disk will contain all of the new messages and your mail! Obviously, a simple way to save on phone bills. Plus, you have the advantage of 'calling' when not many other users are.

Finally, on the miscellaneous side, Interlink supports macros, an entry window, and online printing: all with simple keystrokes. Interlink is also more aesthetically pleasing compared to the black and white Flash! It supports a great proliferation of full-color windows.

However... You knew this was coming -- there must be something bad about this program, isn't there? Well, sort of. Flash! has an advantage in that most of its functions can be performed with a few keystrokes. Most of Interlink's main features can be implemented from the keyboard, but many of them require you to take control of the mouse. This may not seem like a big deal, but it becomes a bother when you constantly have to switch back and forth between the keyboard and the mouse.

Let me conclude by saying that on a feature to feature basis, Interlink is THE telecommunications program. If you don't own a modem yet, and are thinking about buying one, I recommend you also get Interlink. It is laid out well, and very easy to master. Its ability to load in new protocols from disk is also a great advantage, and the record feature could make life a lot easier for you. Plus, you can still use all your favorite desk accessories.

Interlink has only just arrived, but be sure, it's here to stay!

XM301 MODEM WARNING

Reprinted from the newsletter of the Atari Federation

(Editor's note: This article has appeared in several newsletters, and we have heard no further complaints on the subject. It may be that the original author had a somewhat unique problem. However, we reprint it here because it may still be worth checking - just in case...)

If you own an Atari XM301 modem, you may own an electronic "time bomb". After a rash of hardware failures last month, which included smoking a disk drive and two printer interfaces, I found the problem to be my XM301. The modem worked fine, but was killing off my system piece by piece.

The reason has to do with the 13 wires coming from the serial I/O plug, although only nine wires are actually used by the modem. The other four wires have about 1/8 inch of bare wire showing, and are just hanging around, un-terminated, waiting to touch something they shouldn't. I have checked other XM301 modems and this condition existed in them too.

Here is what to do IMMEDIATELY. With the power OFF, remove the two screws from the back of the modem and lift off the plastic case. Inspect the wires where they enter the case. You will find four of the wires are not connected to anything. If these four wires show any bare metal, cut it off.

Be careful not to let the cut off pieces fall into the modem board.

Next, tape each wire individually, so that it cannot possibly touch any other wires or part of the modem. Put the modem back in its case, replace the screws and you are done.

I've written to Atari regarding this problem, but have not yet received a reply.

XM301 MODEM MODIFICATION

by Robert Johnstone
Reprinted from L.A.C.E. BBS Report

If you have recently added an XM301 Atari modem to your 8 bit system and discovered that you now have time to eat dinner while your favorite piece of software is loading, the problem may be the modem. I bought a XM301 just after they came out in 1985 and it worked great. I heard of problems Atari had had with them but they were all fixed before they were released.

The problem started when a fellow Atarian friend of mine asked to pick up an XM301 for him on one of my trips to the bay area. When we got it home, we found that using it caused his 1050 to take so much time booting that it actually stopped 4 or 5 times while trying to load a disk. Back to the store that we got it at to announce that this modem had a problem. Before we left the store, we asked the owner if we could try the replacement to make sure that it worked. We tried five more from his stock on his new XE130/1050 with the same results. No modem today.

It was about two months later that he got another modem hoping that the problem had been solved, but it hadn't.

Now's where the plot thickens. I said, let me take that thing home and see what makes it tick.

After I got it home, I opened the cover (oops, there goes the warranty) and just as I figured, I couldn't see anything wrong. What to do now, I thought. I'll open my own XM301 and surely see some difference that might cause the problem. With the two modem circuit boards sitting side by side infront of me, I couldn't see any problem. Then I turned them over and there it was. Atari had modified his sick modem for the better (pronounced "worst"). The sick modem had a resistor on the bottom of the board and also cut a trace. The good one didn't.

This is getting easy. I figured all I had to do was undo Atari's modification and things would get better. I removed the resistor and fixed the trace with a 1/2" long piece of 30 gauge wire. A second look at the top side of my modem revealed a resistor between the circuit board and the daisy chain wire. His didn't have this. A look at the color rings on my modem showed the resistor to be 470 ohms. No problem. I unsoldered the wire on terminal #3 (closest to the center of the board) and soldered the new 470 resistor to the board with the resistor standing straight up. Then I soldered the wire to the top of the resistor. Clip off the excess and try it out. Wow, it works. I fixed it. The only question now is WHY? This is what I had to do to get this modem working. If what I have said is clear to you and you understand the care that must go into handling an electronic circuit board, then go for it. If not, have someone help you that has the knowledge.

CHECKING OUT THE SX212 MODEM

by Bob Woolley
San Leandro Computer Club

For those of you with no modem, or a SIO connect 8-bit modem, or a 300 baud modem (leave anybody out?), Atari has a great new product for you - the SX212 1200 baud modem. It has a standard RS-232 interface for those users with an 850, or an ST, or a P:R Connection and an SIO commector for those 8-bitters who lack an RS-232 box. It is Hayes compatible and even has a nice row of LEDs across the front of the unit to keep you informed of its status (High Speed, Auto Answer, Carrier Detect, Off Hook, Receive Data, Send Data, Terminal Ready, and Modem Ready). The best thing about this guy is that it only costs $99.95 - list price. A product of increasing integration, it is another level up on the path to single chip, 1200 baud modems - much like the 300 baud XM301 that preceded it.

I can remember my first RS-232 modem. It was also Hayes compatible, which seems to mean that it has to have 6 million switches set before your computer will talk to it. Not the SX212. Absolutely nothing to set on this guy. Move it from your 8-bit to your 16-bit system. . .works just fine with no switch juggling. Aren't any to mess with, anyway. My X-Ray Vision tells me that there are jumpers inside, but it isn't something the average guy is going to fool with. I tried the SX-212 on my ST with Flash. Although I am not any kind of telecommunications expert, the modem worked just fine. It seemed to be perfectly happy with XModem downloads and such. Even the operator trying to interrupt my call didn't bring down the modem. Lots of garbage, but the carrier stayed up. This is exactly what the computer industry needs - an affordable product that you just pull from the box and run!

When it came to my 8-bit system, I hit a little snag. Since the modem would connect to the SIO port, it has to either emulate an 850 and the Hayes modem, or not emulate the 850 and not work on my 8-bit. Guess which one I got? Works just fine on the P:RConnection as a Hayes (knew that since it worked on the ST). Didn't work at all as an 850. I tried a Status command to every address on the SIO buss and got no response from the SX. One thing for sure, no matter how it works, the modem requires a handler. Some devices load their own handler and some programs replace them with the handler that the program wants.

So, without a handler, I had no chance to make the thing work. If the device didn't even talk to the CPU on the SIO buss, how could the handler talk to the modem? The XM301 modem came with an excellent communications program and plenty of documentation on disk to fully describe the handler necessary for that device. I quickly learned that an SIO cable (which is not included in the box - for obvious reasons. You can't use the SIO feature without the handler) and a version of EXPRESS will become available from Atari at some future date. I should hope so. Not requiring a P:R Connection or an 850 can save an 8-bit user as much as the cost of the modem itself. This is one of the greatest assets of this device, the ability to run without additional interfaces. Needless to say, this was most discouraging. Maybe a little hacking could help?

There was (is?) a company called Advanced Interface Devices that made a simple RS-232 adapter for the Atari SIO buss. Since the SIO is already a serial buss that can be programmed to operate in almost any mode, they thought they could just write a handler and wire up a cable that would suffice for RS-232 operation. They produced the R-Verter and managed to do exactly what I described - run the SIO as an RS-232 serial interface.

With this in mind, and a little more X-Ray Vision, it appeared that Atari was using the same method on the SX212. There is a two chip modem set, a couple of RS-232 receiver/driver chips, and audio amp, an LS logic chip, and some sort of clock generator inside this modem. It would be very unusual for a modem chip set to be able to talk to an Atari SIO buss directly (the XM301 uses a microprocessor to operate as a modem and to talk to the buss). So, I had to conclude that Atari used the R-Verter approach. Close inspection of the SIO pinsindicated that the -Command line (pin 7) is not even connected in the SX212. No way to do SIO without that pin. No SIO means an RS-232 emulator. The only one that I am aware of is the AID R-Verter.

So, I logged on to CompuServe and looked for an R-Verter handler in DL2. Luckily, I found exactly what I needed in a file called RVHAND.XMO. It is an R-Verter handler that has been re-compiled for use with HOMETERM. Following the RVHAND.DOC file, I created a copy of HOMETERM that would run on the R-Verter. Booted up on my SX212 and got the 850 status screen. Even though the modem is directly connected, the program thinks it is talking through an 850. All the commands that I needed worked just fine on HOMETERM - downloads, disk directories, pauses, everything!

Tom Neitzel has passed on the word that the same handler will allow the SX212 to run with Amodem 7.4, a program that I am not familiar with, but is very popular. I have not tried to replace the handler in EXPRESS with the R-Verter code. I don't think that task will be as simple as re-compiling the code, since EXPRESS seems to use all available memory. None the less, those 8-bit users who own SIO connect 300 baud modems can upgrade to the SX212 and start tele-computing immediately with Amodem or HOMETERM.

One or two more comments.

The manual states that the modem cannot be used on an 800XL with a cassette recorder. The Motor line is fed into the modem and is grounded through a 680 ohm resistor. This appears to upset the 800XL or the recorder or somebody. I don't see any significant differences between the 800XL and the rest of the Atari line in this respect, so expect this restriction to apply to all 8-bit models.

A suggestion is made to place the modem on top of your disk drive and the phone on top of the modem. Some telephones have magnets in them - put it someplace else if you are not sure. Some disk drives generate considerable heat, while the SX212 seems very cool. I put my modem under my drive, leaving the vents on top of the drive clear for good cooling.

The bottom line on the modem is that is a great value for the money, performs well and can be used on either 8 or 16 bit systems with a minimum of expertise. The 8-bit software is not yet available from Atari, but even that can be fixed for the time being. No modem offers you so much for so little. Don't overlook this bargain!!

PROFESSIONAL MUSICIANS AND THE ATARI ST

The inside story of how Atari won the war against IBM, Apple and Commodore

by Frank Foster

Reprinted from OMAHA ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS newsletter, September 1987 issue

Most MIDI experts will admit that the Atari ST pretty much took the industry by surprise...expecially since the change happened so quickly! Now there is widespread agreement that the Atari ST is becoming the international professional standard for the music industry.

It was two days after the Grammys... Peter Gabriel was meeting with me to discuss an ST MIDI system for his new studio. I wondered why someone like Peter Garbiel would be thinking about an ST when he already owned a Fairlight and could probably afford any computer system he wanted. He listened quitely, taping our conversation with a small portable recorder. I explained that the ST was the continuation of the revolution that MIDI started. This technology--previously out of reach, financially, to the average musician--would now be accessible to even the "potential musicians," people who, with the aid of a computer, might find new musical abilities they had never been aware of.

He smiled, and I realized it was probably the politics of MIDI, this new affordable access to technology, which attracted his attention to the ST. That, plus the freedom these recent advances now offer to the artist. Applications like the Android programs, capable of generating hundreds of new sounds for the musician to choose from, seemed to interest him the most.

"Whether it's an album or video project, I like to work from as many options as possible," he said. After the meeting was over, I watched him walk toward the parking lot with an armload of ST software, and I couldn't help but think that the Atari ST had finally made it. The competition would not be laughing any more; 1987 would be the year of the ST.

From our point of view, the war started in June of 1983. At that time, Hybrid Arts was basically two people. This was about six months before the MIDI spec was accepted as the standard. We shared a booth with the IMA (International MIDI Association) at the NAMM (National Association of Music Merchants) convention and showed the first MIDI sequencer. They saw the Atari screen and started laughing, apparently thinking is was some kind of video game. Then Bob Moore hit the space bar and, to their surprise, music filled the place. The crowd stared in disbelief at the Atari 800 playing back through a Prophet 600. MIDI was virtually unheard of at this stage, and the Prophet was the first synth to be interfaced.

We picked the Atari because the custom LSI chips made it much more suitable for real-time MIDI processing than the Apple or Commodore. Ironically, the very engineering that made the computer great for fast-action arcade-style games also made it perfect for time-critical applications like MIDI sequencing.

In 1984, Hybrid Arts released MidiTrack II and, by now, we had growing competition. Passport Designs had several programs for the Apple II, and Sequentioal Circuits had a system for the Commodore C-64. That same year Roland released a $350 MIDI interface for the IBM. But is was the C-64 that captured most of the market. Companies like Dr. T, MusicData, Syntech and Cherry Lane Technologies jumped into the market with a variety of good software. This gave customers a real choice in programs for the C-64.

When Apple introduced the Mac, it took almost two years for MIDI software to appear. But when it did, in late 1985, several new companies popped up. First came Opcode with a sequencer and patch librarian, followed by Southworth with Total Music, and Mark of the Unicorn, when they introduced Professional Composer (a sheet music program) and later addressed MIDI with Professional Performer (their sequencing system).

The Tramiels had taken over Atari in 1985 and given us the 130XE. We released MidiTrack III to take advantage of the 128K of RAM this computer offered. Nevertheless, it was a difficult time. Though the press acknowledged MidiTrack III as one of the most powerful systems on the market, many people were still laughing at us. To avoid embarrassing questions about the "game computer," some pro musicians actually covered their Atari 130XE labels with gaffer's tape before taking the machines into the studio with them.

By 1986, the Mac was the "computer of choice" with professional musicians. They loved the user interface, and MIDI was becoming an accepted thing--in and out of the studio. For many years, studio people claimed that the MIDI spec was too slow for professional use. But the acceptance of MIDI came more slowly than many had predicted, and six of the major software companies went out of business. It was the beginning of the great MIDI software shakeout, and the sudden introduction of the Amiga and the Atari ST added to the confusion. MIDI developers had to decide which machine to support, or which machine not to support. In the February 1986 issue of Keyboard Magazine, Dave Kusek of Passport Designs stated, "In that Atari's survival is questionable, we've decided not to invest in software development for that machine. There is very little room in the marketplace for a machine with an independant operating system which is not compatible with anything else." In the same issue, Joe West of Computers and Music (a retail store specializing in MIDI software) reported, "Ninety-five percent of our calls are Amiga related. We're not interested in the ST. The fact that a MIDI port is built in is no big deal, since we all know that adding a MIDI port is easy."

Just as the Amiga was getting started, Cherry Lane Technologies (the company commisioned by Commodore to develop MIDI software for the Amiga) went out of business. That left only one company fighting the war for the Amiga. Their concept was MIDI multi-tasking, but the reality is that, when you're doing time-critical software like MIDI sequencing, the last thing you want is an interrupt to update a different application program.

In the April 1987 issue of Keyboard Magazine, the facts about the Amiga's operating system were finally made public. Peter Gotcher revealed that "...some computers even have inherent timing problems. Take, for example, the Commodore Amiga. I have spoken to several developers writing software for the Amiga who have been unable to use the Amiga's high-speed clock to time-stamp incoming MIDI events (the clock starts and stops unpredictably when it is interrupted by other processing tasks). The only alternative is to use the Amiga's 60Hz videoretrace to time events, resulting in a timing accuracy of 16MS. This produces some pretty spastic playback unless you quantize everything."

So, if we can assume that the IBM interface was too expensive and the Amiga has a clock accuracy difficulty, than what makes the ST really better for MIDI than the Mac? Could it be because the ST MIDI is built in? Or, by not buying a Mac, the customer could afford to buy a synth with the money saved? Is it because the ST is noticeably faster than the Mac? Well, the ST does have more flexibility in programming formats and styles--TOS, GEM, GDOS, etc. Sure, color could be a factor, but even in black-and-white, the ST has more display capacity. And, of course, if you really have to use some Mac software, you can run it on the ST using one of the Mac emulator systems. But not vice versa. With MIDI, it's really up to the musicians to decide.

THE MUSICIANS

THE POINTER SISTERS -- The keyboard players for The Pointer Sisters have been the ST's strongest supporters. Whether at an Atari Expo or the Atari booth at CES, Mark Ritter and Greg Whelchel were there educating people about MIDI and the Atari. So it was only natural that the Sisters would pick an Atari system for their own use. But Atari was even more pleased to hear that the Sisters felt strongly enough about the hardware/software combination to endorse it in an ad campaign.

TANGERINE DREAM -- No group is more aware of the ST's popularity in Germany than the Tangerine Dream trio. They are currently using six 1040s in their studio setup. Tangerine Dream is respected not only for their album projects, but for their many film scores as well, including: Sorcerer, Risky Business and Legend. So, for their film work, the SMPTE/MIDI system went into immediate use.

MIKE PINDER -- As the keyboard player of The Moody Blues, Mike was one of the early innovators designing musical arrangements around available technology. He was one of the first to do analog sampling onstage, with the old Mellotron system (or Pindertron, as the upgraded version was known). So, when MIDI started, he was a strong supporter of the Atari 9800 system--later the 130XE and finally, the 1040ST. And, even in the middle of all this technology, Mike's latest solo project still retains a lot of the "old Moodys" feel--perhaps because he uses MIDI as a composing and arranging tool, with the musical ideas taking priority over the technology.

JAY FERGUSON -- Jay has a long history in the industry. He comes, originally, from a classical music background, yet he was extremely successful in the pop music field. He was a founding member of the rock group Spirit, and followed that with Jo Jo Gunne. Later, as a solo artist, he made several hits, including "Thunder Island." For the last several years, he has gotten a reputation for motion picture soundtracks, composing songs for movies such as "Perfect" and "The Terminator." Jay used Hybrid's Atari 8-bit system for three years and recently upgraded to the ST with a MIDI/SMPTE system. He is currently completing the score for a science fiction film called "Pulse", in 70mm and 6-channel Dolby sound. Jay feels that the Atari MIDI system and his career as a film composer have helped to combine his backgrounds in both classical and pop music into one common medium.

MARK WOLFSON, SHARON BOYLE and GARY GOETZMAN -- The team responsible for musical direction in the film "Stop Making Sense" is currently using the Atari for a series of films. The first, titled "And God Created Women", is written and directed by Roger Vadim and stars Rebecca DeMornay (from "Risky Business"). The Atari ST, by the way, makes and on-screen appearance, beyond its behind-the-scenes role as a MIDI production tool.

THE JAZZ ARTISTS -- Lee Ritenour was one of the very first to really get into MIDI from the guitarists's point of view. With his SynthAxe, he simultaneously records MIDI on the Atari and audio on the multi-track tape deck. He later decides how to mix or quantize the digital audio data.

Lee's friend, jazz bassist and keboardist Abraham Laboriel, never got into computers much before the ST, but had no problem with the icon-based interface. He was totally into it, composing at an incredible rate. If he had a question, his friend Don Grusin was there to offer advice. It was no surprise then, when Don's brother--internationally respected jazz artist Dave Grusin--selected the ST for his own system. It seems the Atari ST has enjoyed a word-of-mouth, chain-reaction effect in the jazz session player circle. And these guys are taking it into movie projects with them. This summer, film buffs will notice a new logo sequence at the beginning fo each MGM movie. The soundtrack was programmed entirely on an ST, controlling a whole bank of synths and samplers. Don Grusin and Jeff Fair were able to synchronize the ST to the video with SMPTE timecode, providing the client with instant response to each of the director's suggestions. Since the video image was also created on a computer by Digital Productions, this piece really indicates the amount of control attainable with today's technology.

While assessing the Atari's position in today's music market, it's appropriate to give the last word to one of the trade magazines. Musician Magazine has the largest audited paid circulation in the music-making industry. In the April 1987 issue, Editor Jack Baird made the following statement: "Actually, the biggest single winner at winter NAMM was probably not a music manufacturer at all, but a computer maker: Jack Tramiel, the Holocaust survivor who turned Atari around..." To take it further, Baird also stated, "If 1986 was dubbed 'the year of sampling,' my call is for '87 to be 'the year of the Atari.' Nice job, Jack."

When all is said and done, the Atari ST has proven itself in the music industry--not just in the professional market, but in the consumer market, as well. In fact, the ST is succeeding in taking the promise of MIDI to the people, where it can do the most good, to the average person with a natural curiosity about learning and music. If the ST can make it just a little easier for a person to create beautiful music or to communicate musical ideas, then maybe it has done something really significant, something that sets it apart from other computers. And maybe this will set Atari apart from other computer companies. We think so.

Author's Biography: Frank Foster is the President of Hybrid Arts Inc., Los Angeles, California

MIDI: an introduction

by Larry Weinheimer

Contrary to what some might think, MIDI is not a Multi-Player Maze interface. In the upcoming months I hope to provide some insight into the power of those two little connections in your ST. But MIDI is not just for ST owners! 8-bit interfaces are available.

Atari computers have always made great use of sound. From the original 800/400 series, I have been fascinated by computer generated sound. I began with Music Composer, and have continued with Atari'd music ever since.

In upcoming articles I will try to cover everything from history to current events, hardware to software, terminology from the music side to the computer side, and any thing else you want to ask me. I will try to explain in ways in which everyone can understand, but for that I'll need your help. In order to keep my feet on the ground, I would appreciate your comments.

I'm not an authority, and hardly an expert. I'm an enthusiast. I love what I'm doing with my ST and my synthesizers, and I'm sure that's why Bob has asked me to do these articles. I'm constantly learning about my computer, and the music arena, and I'm just trying to pass that information along. If I ever give out misinformation, I will correct it as soon as I am aware of it.

But enough disclaimers.

It's been said that if what is known about MIDI today was known when it was first implemented, it would not have been implemented. MIDI is a means by which digital music equipment can communicate. It is not just the hardware, but also the information which passes via the hardware. It is not a standard, it is a specification.

In the late seventies microprocessors were being placed in synthesizers to control and manipulate them. It was not long after that sequencers controlling these processors became available. (You hear about sequencers quite often when talking MIDI, and since I can spend a whole article on them, I will, later.)

With sequencers and processors popping up, musicians (and engineers) felt it would be great to have some way of hooking devices together. The engineers at Sequential Circuits said "OK!", and the Universal Synthesizer Interface was born. Then Roland got involved and "decided" a 5-pin DIN connector would be used with a transfer rate of 31.25K baud. They called it "MIDI" -- Musical Instrument Digital Interface. And before the Sales and Marketing departments could figure out exactly what it was, engineers at Yamaha, Korg and Kawai were making MIDI a standard feature of Synths.

Imagine what conversations must have taken place shortly thereafter between the Engineering and Sales:

"What are these 'IN', 'OUT' and 'THRU' connectors you have here?" asks the salesperson.

"Those are the MIDI connectors. They allow the synth to hook up to other synths or sequencer or any other MIDI device."

"You mean we can sell a synth, tell the customer it will hook up to our sequencer or drum machine or ..."

"Yes. And it will hookup to ANYONE's sequencer, drum machine or ..."

"Now wait a minute. We can't have the customers interfacing to our machine with the competition's devices. We'll lose sales. I'll lose money..."

I think this same conversation took place inside Apple when they designed their floppy drive, except the Sales department won.

MIDI version 1.0 was established in November of 1983. There is no governing board, no presiding company. Just a set of guidelines to follow which are "generally accepted". That's what is meant by "specification" rather than "standard".

Now that folks had a way to get inside their Synthesizer without opening them up, controllers for MIDI sprung up all over the place. Companies were producing cards for the Apple II. Interfaces were developed for the Commodore 64 and Atari 800. MIDIs on Micros were gathering momentum. But not until the advent of the MacIntosh's "people interface" did musicians fell they had a computer they could understand.

(Now we get to the good stuff).

Seeing that musicians were a group of people who remained potential buyers of personal computers, two companies set out to win them over (my own opinion): Apple and Atari. Apple introduced its IIGS. The artsy machine with the friendly interface. After all, it has an Ensoniq chip built in! The musicians of course, looked at the chip, looked at their racks of MIDI compatible equipment and said "So what?"

When the ST arrived with built in MIDI, and "point and click" interface, it was and instant hit. Low cost to get started. Color or black and white. It was a musician's dream come true.

But what about those of us who purchased their Atari not for the MIDI, but for the hundreds of other great features?

To me, using your Atari without at least considering making use of MIDI, is like never making use of the Joystick Ports. Think about that. (Remember, I'm biased.)

"But how do I use it?" you may ask.

Stay tuned.

Here are some resources for further MIDI information:

Music Computers and Software (MCS); Monthly magazine. Title says it all. Addresses computers and music. Available at most book and music stores. $2.50 issue, $12.00 annually.

Electronic Musician; Monthly magazine. Covers both sides of the MIDI connection, computer and music. Available at most book and music stores. $2.50 issue, $14.95 annually.

Keyboard; Monthly Magazine. More of a "musicians" magazine. Up-to-date "what's hot, what's not" information. Available most music stores, some book stores. $2.95 issue, $23.95 for 14 issues.

Aftertouch; free quarterly newsletter from Yamaha. Write to: AFTERTOUCH, PO Box 7938, Northridge, CA 91327-7938.

Roland Users Group; free quarterly newsletter from Roland. Write to: Roland Users Group, 7200 Dominion Circle, Los Angeles, CA 90040.

What's Current in MIDI

MIDI guitars are popping up all over. Priced from $200 upward, these devices make it possible for us guitar enthusiast to make the jump into MIDI.

Casio has made the largest contribution of late. Several models, including a low-end "consumer" guitar, and two styles of professional guitars.

Suzuki has a model which lists for $299. It is unique in that the strings do not extend to the neck of the guitar. Instead, the neck has touch sensitive sensors which feed to the synth.

Yamaha and Roland also have MIDI guitars, of which I have only seen in promotional pictures, not actual advertisements for the guitars themselves.

In addition, Yamaha has introduced it's WX7 wind controller. It resembles a soprano sax, or clarinet, although not quite either.

Accordion controllers are getting much press of late. Look for the December issue of Keyboard for more information.

With all the new types of instruments getting MIDIed, look for your favorite at a music store near you.

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NEOPHYTE EIGHT BITTER

by Alan Stancliff
(from ABACUS - Atari Bay Area Computer Users Society)

First of all, I want to apologize for not being here last month. The pressures of finding and starting a new job kept me from devoting much time to writing for the newsletter.

This month we will deal with Atariwriter Plus and columnar typing in this small but excellent word processing program.

Suppose you want to write a column of figures with decimal points and you want the decimal points to line up. With many word processing programs there is a feature that allows you to do this easily. A special key is pressed and you just type in the number. The numbers move from right to left until you hit the period (.) or decimal point. Then the numbers on the right side of the point line up from right to left. (Note: the 1st XLENT WP does this -Ed.)

However, Atariwriter Plus does not have this nifty little feature. (Are you listening, ATARI programmers writing the new Atariwriter for the 80 column screen?) So the typist is tempted to count the number of digits on the left side of the decimal point, tab over to where the decimal point might go, BACK SPACE to the starting point and type away.

If you try this method, you will soon see how difficult and time consuming this can be. It gets easy to lose your place and you find yourself being off by one or two places all the time. It is enough to make you want to pull your hair out.

Fortunately, there is little trick which can easily be learned with a small amount of practice. It is a trick that the teletype operators of old (like TWX operators) had to use and it is really quite simple.

On the old teletype machines, it was not possible to back space. So the operator put "zeros" in front of the smaller numbers as place holders. Therefore a table like this:

```
   5.77
  62.003
 922.20
 201.00
7043.3394
   2.23
```

might look like this:

```
0005.77
0062.003
0922.20
0201.00
7043.3394
0002.23
```

It becomes a matter of simple habit if you practice a few tables with the "place holder" zeros. You simply tab to the far left place of the largest number. If there is no digit, put in a zero. After making up and practicing several tables like this, you will find that you will be able to mentally say "zero" and hit the space bar instead of the "zero" key. After that, tabular typing will no longer be the difficulty that it once was.

A Few Notes on the Freezing Up of Atariwriter Plus

In the last column, which dealt with hanging indents, you may have found that the printer freezes up when you try to print. Or if you looked at the "PRINT PREVIEW," you may have found your program hanging up. Not to worry. This is a very minor bug in Atariwriter Plus and there is a way around it.

This bug occurs when you have a line with a [CONTROL] [L] and find that everything freezes up when you attempt to print put a hard copy or select [OPTION] [P] (print preview). Here's what to do.

First of all, hit the [RESET] key. This will bring you back to the main menu. Then go to the text editor (selection "E" from the main menu). Place the cursor over the [CONTROL] [L]. Press [OPTION] [B]. Using the [CONTROL] and the arrow keys, move the cursor over the number. This highlights the [OPTION] [L] and the following number. Make sure that the cursor is blinking on the far right digit of the number.

Now press [OPTION] and while holding it down press [DELETE BK SP] (Delete backspace key). At the prompt (which says "Are you sure?',) press [Y]. This deletes the highlighted item.

Now move the cursor over a couple of words to the right. Press [OPTION] and while holding it down, press [X]. This will restore what you have just deleted but the deleted material will be in a different position. You should now have eliminated the problem of freezing up. I am not sure why Atariwriter Plus does this, but it does.

ATARI JOURNAL REVIEW

by Garry Jones

About a month or so ago I received a complimentary copy of THE ATARI JOURNAL from the magazine's editor, Jack Durre'. It runs about 26 pages, is formatted and printed with Publishing Partner and a laser printer, and seems much like a typical user group newsletter. In fact, the magazine is available to user groups who wish to use it as their newsletter, either because they can't afford or aren't interested in publishing their own.

Printed in a Times Roman font and three column format, except for one article laid out with Easy Draw and printed on a dot matrix printer, the magazine has a consistent, readable appearance. The typefaces used for titles vary from article to article, but this isn't too objectionable because each typeface is a variant of the Times Roman font used for text. Advertisements and graphics are incorporated in the magazine's layout, adding some interest and variety without interfering with readability.

In terms of content, THE ATARI JOURNAL features three reviews, three articles, a letter from the editor, a rumors column and user group news page. The user group news page is devoted to a different group each issue, with the featured group selected from among those which have chosen to offer THE ATARI JOURNAL as their users group newsletter.

Generally, the articles are informally written, although thorough. Several of the writers have distinctive styles and the informality lets this come through without compromising the information given in the articles. This makes for more interesting reading than the drab tone found in most technical documents and reviews.

Overall, THE ATARI JOURNAL is a reasonably good magazine, especially when considering its small size. It's worth considering for users groups interested in purchasing a prepackaged newsletter. Also, for users groups publishing their own newsletters but looking for material to include, THE ATARI JOURNAL allows republication of articles appearing in it provided appropriate credit is given.

THE ATARI JOURNAL is available on an exchange basis to users groups with their own newsletter, or at the cost of $2.00 per issue or $17.50 for a one year (ten issue) subscription. Correspondence may be addressed to:

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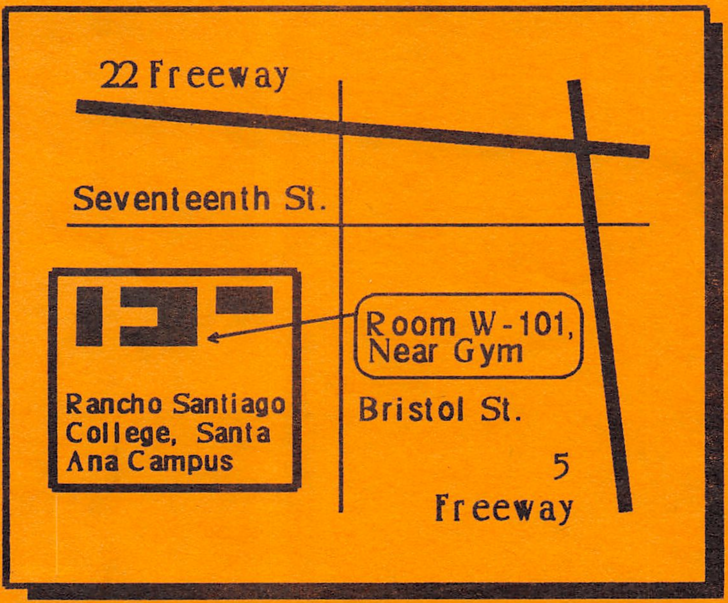

The Atari Computer Association of Orange County features support for the users of the Atari ST and Atari 400/800/XL/XE Computers.

The meetings of the ACAOC are on the Second Sunday of Each Month, att 1:00pm in Room W-101 of the Physical Education building of Rancho Santiago College, in Santa Ana.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

March 13, 1988 April 10, 1988 May 8, 1988

ACAOC Inc. (Atari Computer Association of Orange County) is a non-profit corporation, and is not affiliated with Atari Corporation or Atari Games Inc.

First Year dues for membership in the ACAOC are $24.00. Renewal Dues are $18.00 per year for those renewing within two months of membership expiration. An Associate Membership is available for out-of-area people for $18.00 per year. Membership includes an OrnJuce Magazine subscription, access to the ACAOC OrnJuce BBS, and access to the ACAOC Public Domain Software Libraries. There is no admission charge for guests at the meetings, although guests may purchase the OrnJuce Magazine for $2.00 at the front desk. To receive a membership application send us a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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